

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### HINCHEY SAYS REPUBLICANS ARE FAILING NEW YORK

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today emerged from a meeting of New York's congressional delegation saying that the Bush Administration and some Republican members of the House of Representatives are reneging on their commitment to New York City and New York State. Hinchey's remarks followed the revelation that the administration had persuaded some Republican members that the president should be allowed to break his promise to send \$20 billion to New York for recovery from the terrorist attacks.

"Despite the apparent efforts of some New York Republicans to stand up to President Bush and fight for our state, it seems that the president has now gotten what he wanted," said Hinchey. "The law we passed in September requires that half of the \$40 billion we appropriated go to the recovery effort primarily in New York. Through some tortured logic and sleight of hand, the president is reneging on his promise that we passed into law. More disturbing than that is that he has now convinced some members who represent New York to let him do it. Frankly, I'm disgusted that some of my colleagues have placed their political allegiance to the president above their duty to represent the interests of their state."

Shortly after the September 11 attacks, the Bush Administration agreed that the federal government would provide \$40 billion to address the attack and its aftermath. These funds were appropriated in a bill that was signed into law on September 18. The law permitted the president to spend half of the \$40 billion within 15 days of the law's enactment, with the second half to be allocated in a subsequent bill. That agreement with the White House was written into the law as follows:

"That not less than one-half of the \$40,000,000,000 shall be for disaster recovery activities and assistance related to the terrorist acts in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania."

Of the \$20 billion President Bush obligated in the first 15 days, \$3.2 billion was allocated for New York. On October 17 the president issued a request to Congress providing details of his plans for the remaining \$20 billion. In that request, only six billion dollars was slated to go to New York. The bill subsequently drafted by the Republican leadership of the Appropriations Committee essentially mirrors the president's request. Hinchey and the four

other New York members of the House Appropriations Committee wrote an amendment to restore New York's assistance to the level promised.

The New York Amendment included the following provisions:

- Reimburses COBRA-eligible workers for 100 percent of their health care premiums for twelve months and provides non-COBRA-eligible workers with Medicaid coverage for twelve months. Provides \$1.345 billion for this purpose.
- Establishes the Office of World Trade Center Attack Claims as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to expedite claims of individuals and small businesses.
- Allocates \$6.56 billion to FEMA for activities related to the attacks in New York.
- Authorizes 26 additional weeks of unemployment insurance for workers who lost their jobs as a result of the attacks. Provides \$1.16 billion for this purpose.
- Reimburses New York State for processing Workers Compensation claims that resulted from the attacks. Provides \$195 million for this purpose.
- Provides an additional \$900 million in the Community Development Block Grant program for economic development in New York City. Includes \$10 million specifically for the tourism industry.

"Without our amendment this bill does very little for the people who were injured in the attack or those who lost their jobs and health care in the aftermath," said Hinchey. "There is not a single dollar for unemployment benefits, workers' compensation or healthcare benefits."

The Bush Administration lobbied Republican members of the Appropriations Committee heavily in a successful effort to defeat the New York Amendment. Hinchey and the delegation then began working to have the amendment added when the full House considers the bill. The Republican leadership, however, plans to have the amendment ruled out of order when the bill is debated on the House floor.

Today at an emergency meeting of New York's congressional delegation, a number of Republican members of the delegation informed their colleagues that they were giving in to the president and would support a rule that makes the amendment out of order.

"We will continue to fight for a vote on this amendment, but it has now become much more of an uphill battle," Hinchey added. "The president and his newfound allies in this effort are preaching compromise, but we've already compromised. The simple fact is that President Bush made a promise to New York and now he's backing out of it. This is the first time anyone can remember that a request for disaster relief has been turned down. At this unique moment in history, New Yorkers should take notice."